

City of Belmont
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING DECEMBER 5, 2012
MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of December 5, 2012 was called to order at 7:07 p.m. at the Belmont City Hall Council Chambers.

I. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Kevin Sullivan, Vice Chair Wright, Commissioner (C) Bortoli, Youth Commissioner (YC) Bartee, C Wong, Block, YC Zakeri, and C Eric Sullivan

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais & Secretary (S) Saggau

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

C Bortoli moved, seconded by C Wong, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of November 7, 2012. Vote 7-0 in favor, C Wright abstained.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

C Bortoli reported on the Senior Advisory Board meeting and the Senior Center's special luncheons and activities. The remodeling project at the Center is moving ahead and renderings have been prepared to review.

C Bortoli stated the Sports Advisory Committee met in November and looked at overhead pictures of fields that have the grass and dirt infields with a turfed outfield. They are considering visiting the two sites presented. A proposal has been received from Clear Channel for an electronic billboard at the Sports Complex. Phase Two of the Belmont Redwood-Shores School District expansion and remodeling project will start next summer and this will have an impact on Parks & Recreation programs as some areas will not be available.

C Block reported on the Multi-Use Trails Ad-Hoc Committee meetings. They came up with three approaches: (1) Start off with installation of trail etiquette signs at the trailheads; (2) at mid-term install large comprehensive informational sign systems at the major trailheads and (3) look at further study on the usage of the trail systems. In response to C Wright's question the Ad-Hoc Committee decided that it is not necessary to consider different usage on different days on the trails at this time.

CC Kevin Sullivan noted much progress had been made on the Lake Loop Trail; with the assistance of two park staff members. They set approximately 75 feet of retaining wall. There is a “big dig” volunteer day scheduled for Saturday, December 8, 2012. In addition, the spillway bridge is moving forward. He noted that Passion Trail Bikes shop will hold a holiday evening ride and a group will ride to Eucalyptus Avenue in San Carlos to view the holiday light display.

PRD Gervais announced that the Davey Glen Park Project will be going to the Planning Commission meeting on December 18th for the Conceptual Design review. It is tentatively scheduled for the City Council meeting of January 22, 2013. C Wright will represent the Commission at the Planning Commission meeting. C Eric Sullivan’s suggested posting an announcement about the City Council meeting on the informational sign at the park site.

PRD Gervais reported the City is doing the annual Tree Give-Away with a focus on the Sterling Downs and Homeview Neighborhoods. He noted there has been an increase in requests for fruit trees. A Tree Planting event is scheduled for Saturday, December 15, 2012 with the 4-H at Alexander Park.

YC Zakeri reported on the Tree Board meeting. The Board discussed suggesting species of trees, the importance of preserving trees and fees charged for tree removals.

PRD Gervais said that there are renderings for the Senior Center improvements and they will be brought to the Commission’s next meeting to review.

IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

V. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan and Discussion of Future Planning

PRD Gervais stated that the Parks and Open Space Master Plan was completed in 1992 and was meant to last until 2007. He explained an update was started a couple of times but was never completed. He noted the Parks and Open Space Master Plan is tiered off of the Parks and Open Space Element of the General Plan.

PRD Gervais reviewed the projects in the Parks and Open Space Master Plan that have been completed:

- Alexander Park
- Belameda (Library) Park
- Cipriani Dog Park

- Hastings Tot Lot
- College View Park
- Patricia Wharton Park
- Semeria Park

Projects that have been partially completed include:

- Trail Work
- McDougal Park
- O'Donnell Park
- San Juan Canyon Open Space

Projects that remain to be done include:

- Barrett Community Center
- Athletic Field Renovation
- Davey Glen Park

PRD Gervais explained that an Athletic Field Master Plan was completed in 2000-2001 that included fixing up all fields including the sites the City does not own. Since then, the focus has changed to fields that the City owns; mostly the Belmont Sports Complex.

PRD Gervais added there are some park sites that are unclear on what should be done with them. These include Wakefield Park, Ralston Ranch Park and the Carlmont Canyon. He noted this question should be addressed in the process.

Other items that should be considered in the plan are recreation programs, zoning changes needed and facility management.

PRD Gervais reviewed issues for the Master Plan:

- Express the desired future condition of the parks, recreation and open space in the City of Belmont.
- Connect the parks to recreation
- Expand, maintain or contract park system
- Re-engage the open space
- Plan for Barrett Community Center

PRD Gervais responded to Commission questions.

- Bike lanes were included in the Park & Open Space Master Plan but they have become more of a Public Works responsibility and are part of complete streets. Grant funding is available for complete streets.
- Much of facility maintenance work is contracted out. Subcontracting out to a property management company has been considered but management and control would need to be maintained by the department.
- The General Plan will trickle down to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element of the Master Plan, a smaller general document. This will tie down to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan which is a more specific. During the process the

Sustainability Element and the Land Use Element should be considered for Parks & Recreation.

- The percentage of projects included in the Parks & Open Space Master Plan that were completed is approximately 65-70%. Approximately 25% of the Projects were not completed and it needs to be determined if they should be included in the next plan.
- New items for the next Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan could include Barrett Community Center, Water Dog Lake area and San Juan Canyon.
- The School District field agreement is another item to include in the next plan and determine if the City wants to continue maintaining the athletic fields to allocate for youth sports.
- Financial sustainability needs to be included in the document. There may be opportunities for selling some spaces, getting funds for cell sites or having limited sponsorship opportunities. The process could also be used to generate a non-profit.
- There is limited funding for preparation of the Parks & Open Space Master Plan. PRD Gervais suggested the Commission could review a park each month.
- Interns may be utilized to assist with needed research.
- Consolidating the Athletic Field Master Plan and the San Juan Canyon Open Space Plan could be considered and discussed by the Commission.
- Properties that could be considered to sell are Wakefield Park and Ralston Ranch Park. Discussion could determine if there is support for these parks or if they do not need to part of the park system.
- Paper trails were not included in the Parks & Open Space Master Plan and there should discussion on it. PRD Gervais noted support is needed from the neighborhood for these to happen. It was suggested that the paper trail maps should be made more available so that people are aware of them.
- Ralston Ranch Park does not have any park features. A resident planted some trees and installed some water lines there. C Bortoli recalled plans were created for this park but the majority of the costs for improvements were to move a slope and there were significant ADA issues. Also, the neighborhood did not express support for it.

C Bortoli commented that when the Park & Open Space Master Plan was completed 20 years ago it had the foresight on what projects should be completed. He noted updating this plan will be a major project and should not be too precise and detailed but have some generality to it. He expressed hope that it would be completed before the plan for Barrett is determined. He spoke in support of reviewing small sections at a time.

C Wright agreed with integrating recreation activities in the next iteration of the plan. She noted that sustainability items that could be included in the plan are community gardens and providing a quarterly produce swap event.

C Block spoke in support of promoting the development of community. He noted Semeria Park has become a hub for that neighborhood. He agreed with community gardens and any ideas to bring people together.

YC Zakeri agreed with the idea of community gardens. She would like to see improvements, not necessarily park development, to Wakefield and Ralston Ranch parks. She would not be in favor of selling these properties.

C Eric Sullivan agreed with C Bortoli that updating the plan will be a large undertaking. He spoke in support of taking on the plan piece by piece. He noted information that should be considered is population and demographics. He stated changes may have occurred since 1992 such as increase in youth population and sports participation and this information would be valuable in planning future usage of park spaces. C Sullivan suggested providing granular planning for some larger projects so that there may be some affordable plans that could be accomplished instead of plans that are too expensive to ever be completed.

C Wright agreed information on population and demographics would be helpful and noted it has been predicted that 25% of the population will be over 65 years old in the year 2050. She noted the importance of walkability for all ages.

CC Kevin Sullivan pointed out it is important for items to be discussed to assist in making decisions. He said he does not agree with selling some properties and noted that the schools sold their properties in the 1980s and now the school populations have increased.

CC Kevin Sullivan noted there were a lot of good comments and agreed it is time to start talking about the plan. He said that the Council's Priority Calendar has included items from the Parks & Recreation & Open Space Master Plan. He was in favor of continued discussion on recent agenda items such as field design and open space to keep the conversation going. He also suggested having the Parks & Open Space Master Plan back on the agenda to prioritize items.

C Block commented that opportunities for fundraising should be in future discussions.

PRD Gervais stated he could bring this back to the next meeting to discuss priorities. Future meetings could include small sections of the document on the agenda for discussion and to target neighborhoods to get community input.

b. Action on Whether to Hold a January Meeting

PRD Gervais noted the first Wednesday in January falls on January 2nd. He explained that staff would be out on furlough from December 22, 2012 through January 1, 2013 and that it would be unlikely a substantial agenda could be prepared for that date. He requested the Commission consider if they would like to hold the meeting on the 2nd, cancel it or reschedule it to the following Wednesday, January 9. Following discussion the Commission agreed to reschedule their meeting date to Wednesday, January 9, 2013.

VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Questions and Comments

PRD Gervais reported the following:

- The gates at the Cipriani Dog Park have been fixed.
- Tree trimming work was being completed in the Sterling Downs Neighborhood
- Wi-Fi will be installed at Barrett Community Center and will be password protected.
- The CPRS Conference schedule is now out and available to review.
- The Holiday Craft Faire was successful.
- The Winter/Spring Activity Guide has been mailed out to the community.
- Santa Visits would be held at Fire Station 14 on December 13
- Gold Medal Gym has opened up a martial art studio in the Davey Glen Shopping Center and they have offered to assist the Department with funding some special events.

B. Future Agenda Items

Priorities

Barrett Community Center

San Juan Canyon

Senior Center Painting

Sports Complex Synthetic Turf

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Jonathan Gervais
Parks & Recreation Director